

VZCZCXYZ0006
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAC #0210/01 0581109
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 271109Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3830
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0496
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0290
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0089
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0144
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0148
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ3/SCJ33/SCJ34/SOCSCO LNO//
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T ASUNCION 000210

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DS/IP/WHA AND DS/DSS/ITA
STATE PASS TO USAID LAC/AA
POSTS FOR RSO
NSC FOR SUE CRONIN
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD BARBARA MOORE
NAIROBI FOR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2016

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [KCRM](#)

PA, CO, VE, CU, BR, PM

SUBJECT: PARAGUAY: UPDATE ON LEFTIST ACTIVITY IN CONCEPCION

REF: A. ASUNCION 182 AND PRECEDING

[¶](#)B. 05 ASUNCION 1329 AND PRECEDING
[¶](#)C. 05 ASUNCION 1119 AND PRECEDING

Classified By: PolOff Mark A. Stamilio, reasons 1.4 (b), (c) and (d)

[¶](#)1. (U) Summary: Patria Libre Party (PPL) militants blamed for the February 6 murder of a policeman in the Department of Concepcion (ref A) reportedly siphoned off funds transferred from bank accounts in Europe to legitimate campesino organizations. Brazilian authorities provided Paraguayan authorities documentation of PPL militants' travel abroad to Venezuela, and perhaps to Cuba by way of Panama. Paraguayan authorities recovered documents that show the Government of Venezuela invited PPL members to "establish cooperation" with Venezuela. Local residents reported several confrontations, as recently as last week, with armed individuals believed to be PPL militants. Paraguayan authorities have concluded the militants belong to a clandestine organization supported by minor left-wing groups that espouse "armed struggle against imperialism, which attacks socialist ideals," and that the organization emulates and receives training from the FARC. In an open letter to President Duarte, PPL leader Juan Arrom attempted to distance the party from the militants, and came to the defense of a campesino organization believed to be working with the militants. End Summary.

Funding from Abroad

[¶](#)2. (U) Press reports citing sources within the Attorney General's office indicate that PPL militants blamed for the February 6 murder of a policeman in the Department of Concepcion (ref A) received financial support from abroad, including funds transferred from bank accounts in several European countries. Paraguayan authorities believe the funds were destined for campesino organizations to support legitimate social programs, but militants who infiltrated the organizations siphoned off a portion of the funds to support their radical activities.

Travel Abroad

¶3. (U) Brazilian authorities provided Paraguayan authorities documentation of several PPL militants' travel abroad, via Brazil, to destinations such as Venezuela and Panama. Paraguayan authorities believe the militants traveled to Venezuela to receive training there, or to cross the border with Colombia to receive training from the FARC. They believe the militants traveled to Panama as a stopover en route to Cuba for training.

GOV Link

¶4. (U) Paraguayan authorities investigating the February 6 murder recovered documents from PPL members' possession that show the Government of Venezuela invited "interested parties" to "establish cooperation" with Venezuela. Venezuelan ambassador to Paraguay Jose Huerta Castillo explained to the press that the invitation was to establish a "working group" as part of a "cultural exchange program" initiated in 2004.

Reported Sightings and Armed Confrontations

¶5. (U) Local residents in Concepcion reported several confrontations, as recently as last week, with armed individuals believed to be PPL militants. In one incident, armed individuals passing through a wooded area near the location of the February 6 murder were involved in a shoot-out with workers at a ranch. A similar group of armed individuals reportedly detonated a grenade when confronted by a group of police and civilians near the same ranch in mid-2005. Shortly after the February 6 murder, a campesino youth reported that he was detained for several hours in the woods by three armed individuals dressed in camouflage. He later identified two of the individuals as PPL fugitives wanted in the 2003 kidnapping and murder of Cecilia Cubas (ref B).

¶6. (U) Residents report that sightings of armed groups and individuals in the area began roughly a year ago, including flights in and out of the zone by small aircraft transporting heavily armed men wearing camouflage fatigues. Residents report that trips to the area by representatives of the Campesino Organization of the North (OCN) increased around the same time. (Note: On February 5, two OCN representatives and four PPL members were arrested for transporting explosives in a truck owned by the OCN (ref A). The arrests may have prompted the February 6 murder. End Note.) Based on the current investigation, Paraguayan authorities have concluded that a clandestine organization that includes PPL militants and possible FARC operatives is operating in the area. The authorities believe the organization is supported by minor left-wing groups that espouse "armed struggle against imperialism, which attacks socialist ideals," and that it emulates and receives training from the FARC.

PPL Denies Responsibility for Violence

¶7. (U) In an open letter to President Duarte, PPL leader Juan Arrom attempted to distance the party from the militants blamed for the February 6 murder, claiming that the party does not espouse or condone guerrilla tactics. Arrom also came to the defense of campesino organizations such as the OCN, asserting that Duarte was attempting to link them to the February 6 murder "in order to once again unleash the fury of the state's repressive apparatus on (them)."

¶8. (S) Comment: Arrom and Anuncio Marti are accused of orchestrating the 2001 kidnapping of Maria Edith Bordon de Debernardi (ref C), and were granted refugee status in Brazil after they allegedly were tortured by authorities in Paraguay. The PPL militants blamed for the February 6 murder are likely associated with the PPL faction led by Osmar Martinez, who orchestrated the Cubas kidnapping. Although there is some evidence of disagreement between Arrom and Marti regarding whether to support Martinez's plans to kidnap Cubas, sensitive reporting suggests that Arrom's public attempts to distance himself and the party from the criminal

acts of Martinez and others are exaggerated. Arrom remains the party's leader, and continues to support violent struggle against the state. End Comment.

CASON